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OBSERVER

Pick Your Menace

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I've had a nasty suspicion lately that I may be a pinko. It came on me very strong Saturday when, searching the radio dial for that fellow who plays Russ Columbo and other 1931-vintage records, I picked up President Reagan instead.

The President was talking about the Red menace in Nicaragua. He often does. The Red menace in Nicaragua seems to prey on his mind. I sympathize with him about that. The I.R.S. preys on my mind with the same intensity that the Red menace in Nicaragua seems to prey on the President's, and I can assure you that having your mind preyed on is no laughing matter.

The galling part of it is the public's indifference to the crisis with which the preyed-upon mind happens to be obsessed. It is my conviction, for example, that the I.R.S. is in advanced collapse and completely out of control, and that the situation is so critical that the I.R.S. will soon be incapable of collecting taxes from anybody but me.

Attempts to alert the nation to this crisis provoke nothing but guffawing and sneers. Even President Reagan, I am sorry to say, has ignored my warnings that something must be done fast about the I.R.S. unless the Government wants to end up trying to support itself solely on gleanings from my income.

Personally, I consider these contributions more than generous but I'm afraid the Boeing Aircraft Company is going to be disappointed when it discovers the Pentagon can no longer afford pliers at \$5,096 per pair.

Well, as I say, I was listening to the President go on about the Red menace in Nicaragua and not thinking much about it except for wondering whether Russ Columbo would follow him immediately or whether I'd have to listen to a Democratic Party reply, when it suddenly occurred to me that maybe the reason I was not worrying right along with the President was that I was a pinko.

The truth was that I wasn't so upset about Communists in Nicaragua that I wanted to overthrow their Government, as the President wants to do.

Nicaragua just isn't one of your awesome powers. It's hard to imagine Nicaragua invading, say, the British Isles, or winning a significant number of gold medals at the Olympics, or terrifying the Russians by signing a nonaggression treaty with the Chinese, or giving the world a truly great business idea like fried-chicken franchising.

President Reagan obviously can imagine all this, because he keeps warning us we had better overthrow

the Nicaraguan Government before it destroys our way of life throughout Central America.

Well, I don't want to see our way of life destroyed, but whether it should be the destiny of the rest of Central America is something I'd leave for Central America to decide. If Central America wants my advice, I'd say go for the paid vacations, the credit cards and summering in a cool climate, but don't be so eager to accept political ads on television, Pentagon pliers at \$5,096 per pair and the I.R.S.

This kind of talk probably exasperates President Reagan because his mind is heavily preyed on by the Red menace in Nicaragua. It is natural he might think that people who don't much care about it could be a little pinko.

I know how easy it is to believe that people not worried about the imminent collapse of the I.R.S. are defi-

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nitely wacko. It's only natural to think the worst of people who are too dense to realize what the really pressing, Number One, civilization-menacing problem of the age is.

I don't go that far and call President Reagan a wacko. On the other hand, I haven't heard him calling on anybody to wake up and do something about the I.R.S. before it becomes a total disaster that can't collect anybody's taxes but mine. A President who was really on top of the threats to our way of life would bring everybody back from the Geneva talks to tell Congress that the Russians will never cease adding to their devilish arsenal so long as America has an I.R.S. too weak to collect anybody's taxes but mine.

Compared with this threat to the nation, what does Communist rule in Nicaragua amount to? Sure, there are Communists in charge down there, but there are Communists in charge in Yugoslavia and China too, and you don't hear the President saying they'd better say "uncle" if they don't want Casey of the C.I.A. to give them a taste of freedom's firepower. □